THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE

JAZZ INFORMATION

VOL. I, NO. 12 DECEMBER 1, 1939 TEN CENTS

"LONDON HOT CLUB SEXTET" ASSEMBLED BY LEONARD FEATHER FOR BLUEBIRD

A mixed band selected by Leonard Feather, English swing critic who is now in New York, will make four sides this afternoon (December 1st) for the Bluebird label.

The combination, known as the Sextet of the Rhythm Club of London, comprises three former members of Ambrose's orchestra and three musicians on British West Indian origin.

Danny Polo will be on clarinet, making his first session since returning to the States. Albert Harris on guitar and Pete Barry, bass, are the other ex-Ambrose men.

The three colored artists taking part are all of Trinidad descent. Hazel Scott, who is still playing piano and singing at Cafe Society, makes her recording debut on the session, and will sing on two sides. Pete Brown will play alto and trumpet, with Arthur Herbert from Coleman Hawkins' band on drums.

Four original numbers have been written for the session by Feather, who has also sketched out skeleton arrangements.

Danny Polo is also expected to record shortly as a member of Joe Sullivan's combination, probably for the Vocalion label.

SWINGIN' THE DREAM OPENS

Swingin' The Dream, Erik Charell's modern production of Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream", opened Wednesday night at the Center Theatre. Benny Goodman and his Sextet, Louis Armstrong, and Bud Freeman's Summa Cum Laude band are featured in the performance.

Goodman, Charlie Christians, Lionel Hampton, Fletcher Henderson, Arthur Bernstein and Nick Fatool comprise the sextet, while Freeman is using Max Kaminsky, Brad Gowans, Pee Wee Russell, Dave Bowman, Eddie Condon and Zutty Singleton.

BILLIE HOLIDAY AT KELLY'S STABLE

Billie Holiday opened at Kelly's Stable in midtown New York Tuesday night, to sing there for two weeks. The Savoy Sultans and the Harlem Highlanders also continue their run, completing the bill at the 51st Street night spot.

Miss Holiday's engagement follows her appearance at Cafe Society and a week in Washington, D.C.

PHILADELPHIA HOT CLUB FORMED

Philadelphia's active group of jazz enthusiasts has organized a hot club, which met for the first time on November 29th.

The club will serve as a mailing list to notify its members of coming sessions or visits by hot musicians; as an official group to entertain visiting musicians; and as a working group to facilitate trading among Philadelphia collectors. It will encourage bookers to bring hot bands to Philadelphia, and support the issue or re-issue of good jazz records by private or commercial companies.

Members of this group have been conducting a radio program twice a week on station WHAT for the past three months. On Wednesday nights, from 10:30 to 11:00, an outstanding soloist is featured either in person or through recordings. The Saturday night program, from 11:00 on, is devoted to reviewing the latest hot records and reissues. Announcer for the programs is Burt Lord, and Larry Mallery comments on the records.

Applicants for membership in the club should send a postcard to the radio station, listing three favorite soloists and records on which they appear. A final election meeting of the club will be held next week at WHAT.

BERIGAN AT FIESTA DANCETERIA; MARSALA CONTINUES AT SPOT

The Fiesta, new dance-cafeteria on 42nd Street, continues its name band policy by booking Bunny Berigan's orchestra last night and tonight. Berigan replaced Teddy Powell. Joe Marsala's band continues on the lower floor of the Fiesta.

Dick Messner is scheduled to go in after Berigan for a one-nighter, after which George Hall will occupy the spot until replaced by Ben Bernie December 7th. Jack Jenney's orchestra will take over from Bernie for a week; Red Norvo replaces him December 28th, remaining until January 17th.

STACY RECORDS FOR VARSITY AGAIN

Jess Stacy's recording band returned to United States Records' studios Thursday night, November 30th, to wax four sides for the Varsity label. The band again featured Bill Butterfield, Les Jenkins, Eddie Miller and Don Carter.

COMMODORE MAKES RECORDS AGAIN; OLD NUMBERS REVIVED AT SESSION

First Band Sides In Year Star Wettling, Kaminsky, Russell

Milton Gabler made band records for his Commodore label Thursday, November 30th, for the first time in more than a year.

A recording group which included four members of Bud Freeman's Summa Cum Laude orchestra, two Paul Whiteman men, and one from Muggsy Spanier's Ragtime Band, waxed four old jazz tunes: Ballin' The Jack, It's Right Here For You, Strut Miss Lizzie, and Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None Of My Jelly Roll.

Personnel of the band was: Max Kaminsky, trumpet; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Joe Bushkin, piano; Eddie Condon, guitar; George Wettling, drums; Artie Shapiro, bass; Brad Gowans, valve trombone. Gowans also made skeleton arrangements for the sides.

All of these men had played on previous Commodore record sessions except Kaminsky, who replaced Bobby Hackett in the recording line-up, and Gowans. Since the sides made a year ago by the Bud Freeman Trio and Chu Berry's band, Commodore releases have been confined to vocal and piano solo recordings.

The four sides made yesterday are to be issued soon on the Commodore's "Classics In Swing" label.

FREEMAN, SPANIER LEAVE NICK'S

Bud Freeman's plans to do double duty at Nick's Tavern and in Swingin' The Dream have fallen through, and the Summa Cum Laude orchestra is definitely out of Nick's and into the show.

Muggsy Spanier, too, will leave Nick's early next week. Future bookings for the spot have not yet been concluded. Wingy Mannone is mentioned as a possibility.

Nick Caiazza, tenor who replaced Bernie Billings in Muggsy's band, has joined the old Artie Shaw orchestra, which is under the leadership of George Auld since Tony Pastor's departure.

HERMAN TO FAMOUS DOOR

Woody Herman and his band replaced Jack Jenney at the Famous Door Tuesday night. The engagement is Woody's second at the spot which boosted him into national prominence.

A letter from Chicago

by Frank Marshall Davis

Gentlemen:

I have been intending for some weeks to compliment you on the general excellence of your interesting publication, JAZZ INFORMATION, and to wish you every success in the world. As a working newspaperman I realize the difficulties experienced in your task, and honestly hope the response from those who want weekly news on hot jazz will be sufficient to insure continuous and profitable publication.

In your Nov. 7th issue, George Beall of Detroit asks what has happened to Stompy Evans. I regret to say that he is dead. I understand he passed away in Colorado around '29 or '30, a victim of tuberculosis. He was known as both Stompy and Stump Evans, and there was justification for both names. The Stompy name came from his amazing swing on alto sax and clarinet, and the Stump was from his shortness of stature.

When I first came to Chicago in 1927 he was playing in Erskine Tate's band at the Vendome Theatre in the 3100 block on South State Street. Whenever he took a chorus, he would invariably get up and sit on the back of his chair where he could be better seen. This was the day when Teddy Weatherford, Louis Armstrong, Jimmy Bertrand and other stars were in the band, and for a while Fats Waller was on the organ at the Vendome. Stompy Evans used to play after the theatre closed on Sunday night at one of the typical "dancing classes" at the old Alvin Dansant at 51st and Michigan. The band was a young group known as Louis Thigpen and his band, with Thigpen being groomed as a second Armstrong.

Anyway, if ever a joint jumped it was when Evans got up. I am glad to see that Mr. Beall also considers him a great artist, for to me he was one of the best of that period. He should also be heard to advantage on any records of that period made by Tate.

However, there was another alto and clarinetist here at that time who was as good or better than Evans. His name was Vance Dixon, and he played with Sammy Stewart at the Metropolitan Theatre, 47th and South Parkway. In those days the South Side was divided on which was the better band, that of Stewart or of Tate, as well as on whether Evans or Dixon was the better player. I don't know whether Dixon (who is also dead, I understand) ever recorded, but he was a real showman, using many of the trick devices popular in that period.

He would throw his clarinet from hand to hand and play his saxophone behind him. I have been told he introduced the then popular device of holding one note for several choruses. But disregarding these tricks, he was a master musician with marvelous ideas and technique. He blew one of the loudest (excuse me, I mean THE loudest) clarinet and sax I ever heard, with a tone about three times as big as that of any other player. Evans' tone was not nearly so big, but his style was equally hot. Incidentally, I think the Tate band recorded for Vocalion.

In connection with the article by Walter E. Schaap on "Jazzmen Abroad", I would like to point out that Sidney Bechet was the first jazz star to give a command performance before the king and queen of England. This was in 1919. After the Prince of Wales, now the Duke of Windsor, heard Cook's band on the London stage, he had his father invite the group to the palace. Its acceptance by British royalty is one of the reasons why Europe followed suit so quickly in recognizing jazz.

Chicago, November 14, 1939.

(EDITORS' NOTE: Erskine Tate's orchestra recorded Static Strut -- Stomp Off, Let's Go, Vocalion 153-72 and 1027, with a personnel including Stomp Evans, Teddy Weatherford and Louis Armstrong. Evans is also to be heard in Jelly Roll Morton's Beale Street Blues -- Pearls (Bluebird B-10252), Wild Man Blues -- Jungle Blues (Bluebird B-10256), and Billy Goat Stomp - Hyena Blues (Victor cut-out 20772), and a number of Richard M. Jones' Jazz Wizards records on Okeh: Kin To Kant Blues -- Mushmouth Blues (Okeh 83-49), Dusty Bottom Blues -- Scagmore Green (Okeh 8341), and Baby O' Mine (Okeh 8390), as well as a few more obscure discs. Sammy Stewart waxed My Daddy Rocks Me -- Manda, on Puritan 11340, and 'Cause I Feel Low Down -- Ol' Man River, on Vocalion 15724; Vance Dixon may have played in these. And there's a Paramount by Dixon's Jazz Maniacs, No. 12446 (Crazy Quilt), which perhaps features this musician.)

JAZZ INFORMATION

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Editors

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COLLECTORS' ITEMS

Through the cooperation of Orin Blackstone of New Orleans, Jazz Information has obtained the personnel of the twenty sides by Joseph Robichaux and his New Orleans Boys. These records, made in New York in 1932, featured: Eugene Ware, trumpet; Alfred Guichard, alto sax; Eugene Porter, tenor sax; Joe Robichaux, piano; Ward Crosby, drums; Walter Williams, guitar.

The sides, issued on Vocalion, are: King Kong Stomp --- St. Louis Blues, 2539; Lazybones --- Stormy Weather, 2540; You Keep Me Always Living In Sin --- Jig Music, 2545; Forty Second Street -- Ring Dem Bells, 2575; Riff --- Shake It And Break It, 2592.

Also: Why Should I Cry Over You -- After Me The Sun Goes Down, 26-10; I Would Do Anything For You -- Zola, 2646; Foot Scuffle -- Saturday Night Fish Fry Drag, 2796; She Don't Love Me --- Every Tub, 2827; Sleep Come On And Take Me --- Just Like A Falling Star, 2881.

The same six-man band made six sides for Perfect with Chick Bullock at the same time, but Joe Robichaux doesn't remember the titles.

He knew Dutty well, Blackstone writes, but confirmed the fact that he never played with him. Incidentally, Joe is a nephew, not son, of the late John Robichaux, and he's also a nephew of Johnny and Baby Dodds.

* * *

Carl Kraft, of Portsmouth, Va., brings to our attention the familiar collectors' complaint concerning the later Harmony records. His first examples are the two records by the Memphis Hot Shots.

One of these, unquestionably an Ellington, is listed on page 82 of Hot Discography: I Can't Realize You Love Me (100549) --- I'm So In Love With You (100550), on Harmony 1377-H, also on Velvetone 2455-V and Clarion 6391.

There are two other sides, Baby Won't You Please Come Home (100548) -- Shout, Sister, Shout (100547), on Harmony 1368-H. The very evident fact that these are not by Ellington's orchestra hasn't prevented them from being classed among the Duke's products, merely because the master numbers are adjacent. In Rhythm On Record, Schleman credits them to Luis Russell -- hardly a more acceptable guess. Our own in-

(Continued on Page four)

NEW RECORDS

MEADE "LUX" LEWIS (Blue Note 8, 9) The Blues, parts 1 to 4. Two 12-inch records, in folder album.

This is the longest jazz record ever made: a piano solo on four 12-inch sides, lasting almost twenty minutes; each side a complete entity, but with evident continuity from first to last. In its twenty-five choruses, Meade "Lux" Lewis carries out at greater length the ideas he expressed in his first Blue Note and Solo Art recordings.

Far from being an expression of the blues spirit in its authentic simplicity, this music is the product of Lewis' highly personal development. His playing is very intellectual, within the limitations set by its humble origin in the blues style. From the phrases and accents of the blues, Meade builds an extremely individual language.

"The Blues" is slow, meditative and lazy (the tempo drags so, in fact, that the second part begins much slower than the first). Entirely relaxed, sacrificing swing, solid movement and rhythmic intensity to cool, delicate variations, it progresses haltingly and with little formal development. Meade's familiar blues, in which the right hand gropes for new ideas against a characteristic figure pounded or caressed by the left, begins the piece, and recurs again and again.

Contrast, aside from the right hand's melodic variations, appears in the deliberate, heavy bass used toward the end of each part; in the new harmonies which begin in part 1, chorus 4; in such delightful new themes as part 2, chorus 4; and in such unusual effects as the sustained chords in part 2, chorus 5. The introductions to parts 3 and 4 are particularly interesting: the first for its special beauty, the other for its humor; and the left hand chords toward the end of part 4 are worth special mention.

A performance like this is an unparalleled test of musical skill and invention, and the sponsors of Blue Note Records deserve great credit for their enterprise in preserving it on wax.

BOB CROSBY'S Orchestra (De 2839) Angry -- It's A Whole New Thing. The hot side of this record, which sports a Teddy Grace vocal, is another example of the fine spirit and musicianship of the Dixielanders, which makes even an ordinary standard so pleasant to listen to. The pretty brass ensembles with their clarinet counterpoint, piano behind the vocal, tenor sax solo, and clarinet breaks are not out of the ordinary, but all very nice.

BIX BEIDERBECKE and his Orchestra, I'll Be A Friend "With Pleasure"--

PAUL WHITEMAN and his Orchestra, Mary (Vi 26415). Personnel of first side only: Bix Beiderbecke, Ray Ludwig, cornets; Boyce Cullen, trombone; Benny Goodman, clarinet; Jimmy Dorsey, Pee Wee Russell, saxes; Gene Krupa, drums; piano and bass, unknown.

The Victor company has carried the Bix revival a little too far in reissuing I'll Be A Friend, one of the worst records he ever made. Entirely commercial, and with a horrible vocal by Wes Vaughn, it features also a cornet solo which doesn't add to Bix's reputation. The same might be said of Goodman and his clarinet solo. The reverse, an old Whiteman commercial with violins and all the trimmings, is better. Between Henry Busse's mute diddling, Bix leads a fine brass ensemble and takes a short break.

JACK TEAGARDEN'S Orchestra (Co 35-297) Wolverine Blues - Muddy River Blues. Two disappointing sides by a band which ought to do better. Wolverine is fast, with much section work, some undistinguished solos, and a few trombone breaks by Mr. Teagarden. Muddy River is slow blues with a Teagarden vocal; not much better.

TEDDY WILSON'S Orchestra (Co 35298) Hallelujah--Some Other Spring. The Wilson band is improving, with experience and through changes in personnel, but still has little to offer. Teddy's piano choruses are interesting mainly for the extremely strong touch he uses, making the instrument sound almost like a xylophone. The other soloists haven't much to say.

BOB ZURKE'S Delta Rhythm Band (Vi 26411) Cuban Boogie Woogie -- On A Little Street In Singapore. People who maintain that genuine boogie-woogie piano is dull might gain by hearing this intolerably boring, phony imitation. Zurke's piano is as good technically, and as mechanical, as ever.

JOHNNY WILLIAMS and his Boys (Vo 5213) Clarinet Marmalade -- Memory Lane. Russ Case, trumpet; Moe Zudekoff, trombone; Reginald Merrill, clarinet; Hank Ross, tenor sax; Walter Gross, piano; Johnny Williams, drums.

Just another case of a bunch of competent musicians trying to play jazz. In Clarinet Marmalade everything, without exception, fails to come off. Merrill, Case and Williams play junk, and Gross chooses Billy Kyle, of all pianists, to be his model.

BIG BILL (Vo 05204) Fightin' Little Rooster -- Oh Yes. Mr. Broonzy has come down a bit in his latest race disc. On the first side, accompanied by alto sax, piano, guitar and bass, there's nothing of interest. Oh Yes, made with a different combination, is better, and features fine piano and guitar.

NOTICE

The first five subscribers who send us copies in good condition of Vol. I, No. 1 of Jazz Information will be gratefully rewarded with a four week extension of their subscription.

IN THE

NEXT ISSUE

"FROM BACH

TO JAZZ"

by Walter Sidney

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COLLECTORS' ITEMS

(Continued from Page two)
clination is to ascribe them to Mills Blue Rhythm Band; we wait confirmation or denial.

As Kraft's letter points out, in the Dixie Stompers period the same master numbers (140000 series) applied to Harmony, Velvetone and Diva records, as well as to Columbias. For example, he gives the Stompers' St. Louis Blues (144136) - Variety Stomp (144136), on Harmony 451-H and Diva 2451-G, and Snag It (143334) --- Ain't She Sweet (143333), on Harmony 353-H and Velvetone 13-53-V. These master numbers fit in the Columbia series of that time.

However, on the later Harmonys and Velvetones, Mr. Kraft goes on, a different number is used on the same master, when issued on a different label, in a way which makes the late Harmony master numbers quite useless as sources of information.

For example, the Mound City Blue Blowers' You Rascal You (404995)--Darktown Strutters Ball (404994), Okeh 41526, and Georgia On My Mind (404966) -- I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me (404967), Okeh 41515, were repressed on Harmony 1378-H and 1375-H, all under the name of the Tennessee Music Men, with master numbers 130487, 351052, 351051 and 351049 respectively. On these Harmonys, he adds, Red McKenzie's vocals are credited to 'Jack King'.

Now, he continues, for Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble (100609) -- Raggin' The Scale (100610), by the Tennessee Music Men, on Velvetone 2534-V and Harmony 1427-H. This, when unscrambled, is of course Miff Mole and his Molers, Okeh 41445, master number 400850, on the first side; and Joe Venuti's Blue Four, Okeh 41361, master number 404005, on the second.

While we're on this subject, we might as well try to identify some more of the Harmonys. Arnold Klein of Baltimore has a Tennessee Music Men, Harmony 1406-H, of Loveless Love (100592), on which he hears Miff Mole and Red Nichols. Eugene Benyas of Harvard has two Venuti-Lang sides on Harmony 1346-H, under the name of the All Star Rhythm Boys: Pardon Me Pretty Baby (100545) and Little Buttercup (100546); notice that these masters, too, are adjacent to the Memphis Hot Shots mentioned above.

Then there are Harmony 1415-H, Bugle Call Rag -- Deep Harlem, and 1422-H, No Trumps -- Baby Won't You Please Come Home, both under the Tennessee pseudonym (no master numbers available).

Carl Kraft also has a Perfect, number 14824, I'm In Love Again -- Sometimes I'm Happy, by the Southampton Society Orchestra, featuring Red Nichols, Miff Mole and Jimmy Dorsey. Is this the same as the Six Hottentots on Banner?

He also mentions a Clarence Williams Novelty Four, Okeh 8645, In The Bottle Blues (401390)--What'ya Want Me To Do (401391), with Eddie Lang on guitar, and a Clarence Williams Washboard Band, Okeh 8790, Worn Out Blues (403973) -- Whip Me With Plenty Of Love (403972), with a fine saxo-clarinetist and a good trumpet.

When I Can't Be With You — Come Easy, Go Easy, Love, Victor 22776, by the Carolina Dandies, he says sounds like a McKinney's Cotton Pickers, and has a fine vocal on each side. Finally, he wants information on a rare Vocalion, number 25015, Hungry Man's Scuffle -- Piano Stomp, by the Jolly Jivers.

THE BANDWAGON

Nick Caiazza, tenor with Muggsy, subbed for Gil Rodin of the Crosby band for two days during Gil's recent absence. Jimmy Lamare, Nappy's brother, also subbed for Gil. Crosby plays Troy, N. Y., on Friday, Dec. 1, the White Plains County Center Saturday night and Worcester, Mass., on Sunday.

Joe Marsala's orchestra continues at the Fiesta until January. The band now sounds better than ever; Marty is playing astonishing trumpet and Art Hodes' "solo blues style" sounds fine with the band. The rhythm section, with Don Carter back and Jack Goss added, is the finest Marsala has ever had. Band played an N.Y.U. dance last week, with Hot Lips Page, Zutty Singleton and Buster Smith augmenting the regular crew.

Garland Wilson, who returned to the U.S. recently, is playing solo piano at the Ruban Bleu. Les Boone and his band at Uncle Sam's Music Hall, a midtown spot. Clarence Profit still plays nightly at the Village Vanguard.

Pete Brown's band continues at the Onyx, with Stella Brooks singing. Marlowe plays piano in the intermissions. Emperor Jones' band still at the Brick Club. Joe Venuti moves into Roseland Friday, and Coleman Hawkins continues at the Arcadia.

Charlie Barnet replaces Edgar Hayes at the 125th Street Apollo tonight. Andy Kirk and Teddy Wilson continue at the Golden Gate. Teddy Hill replaced Benny Carter at the Savoy Thursday night.

Lionel Hampton, Zutty Singleton and Charlie Christians showed up at Billie Holiday's Kelly's Stable opening Tuesday. Duke Ellington has added a second bassist, Jimmy Blanton, to his orchestra.

Sidney Bechet is still playing at the Log Cabin, in Fonda, N.Y. According to Harry Lim, who visited him last week, "Pops is doing fine." Bechet may soon record with Louis Armstrong, it is said.

"I FOUND A NEW PAPER!"

"I have just finished reading your little paper, which you were so kind as to send me, and I was greatly elated to learn of the existence of a publication so evidently rooted in the earth of non-commercial jazz ."

--- H. L., Long Beach, L. I.

THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE

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